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Warrior Transition Brigade Leadership Changes Hands, Important Mission Supporting Soldiers Continues

**By Gail Cureton
Northern Regional
Medical Command
Public Affairs**

In a gymnasium filled with Soldiers, family, civilians and friends, Col. Dana S. Tankins said farewell to the unit he led for nearly two years when he relinquished the Warrior Transition Brigade-National Capital Region (WTB-NCR) flag to Brig. Gen. Robert D. Tenhet, Northern Regional Medical Command commanding general, during a change of command ceremony Jan. 15.

Tankins officially passed the mantle of command to Col. Christopher Boyle, who assumes command of one of the Army's largest and most high-profile warrior transition units headquartered near the Department of Defense's flagship hospital--Walter Reed National Military Medical Center--and just a few miles from the nation's capital.

"This command has taught me what it means to fiercely advocate," said Tankins. "WTB-NCR Soldiers understand what it means to roll up their sleeves, dig in, commit and resolve issues."

During his farewell speech, Tankins fought to hold back tears as he told an emotional story of his first few weeks of command when he attended a meeting with caregivers. "They shared their pain, anger, hardships, battles, disappointments, struggles and concerns. That meeting transformed me, and helped shape my command philosophy," he said. "Advocating for the Soldier and their caregivers is our top priority."

"What we do or fail to do impacts the rest of someone's life," Tankins added.

During his tenure as brigade commander, the WTB



Photo by Gail Cureton

Brig. Gen. Robert D. Tenhet presents the Warrior Transition Brigade-National Capital Region's flag to incoming Commanding Officer Col. Christopher Boyle during the change of command ceremony Jan. 15.

has found new ways to deliver support to recovering Soldiers that allow them to focus on their mission, which is to heal and transition. Tankins implemented a Special Compensation for Assistance with Activities of Daily Living Program board to resolve 140 cases, increased enrollment in the Career and Readiness Education Program from 30 to 90 percent, decreased Soldier and fam-

ily complaints by 90 percent; established a brigade-level Army Family Action Plan committee giving all WTB families a voice, and initiated a Caregiver Recognition Program to thank caregivers for the roles they play in helping the WTB accomplish its mission.

Tankins will retire soon after 27 years of Army service.

Boyle, who was most recently assigned to Headquarters,

Department of the Army as G-3/5/7 division chief, promised to ensure that the WTB continues to fulfill its important mission.

"I am proud to be a part of a unit and a profession that cares so much about its people," Boyle said. "I look forward to working with a team that is dedicated to serving our most precious resource — our Soldiers and their Families."

Commander's Column

Our People are Our Foundation

We do three things at Walter Reed Bethesda: Accomplish our mission; take care of our people; take care of our families. Mission - People: Good leaders find ways to do both. Despite changes and transformations, Mission - People endures.

We begin the New Year by launching our 2015-2018 Walter Reed National Military Medical Center Strategic Plan. Our new icon summarizes our way ahead — One Priority: An extraordinary patient experience for every patient, every time; two foundations: Our People; Stewardship & Accountability; and Four pillars: Quality; Readiness; Education; Research.

Our patients are in the center. Our people are at the top. So, this article focuses on our priority and this foundation. Please join our February and March town halls to learn more about our strategic plan.

The extraordinary patient experience — timely, patient friendly access to high quality health care and compassion — will be the centerpiece of our strategic plan. We are privileged to serve America's heroes — service members and their families; our retirees and their families. We must understand that our patient's perception is their reality. Each and every one of our people, regardless of position, role or responsibility, is critical to the extraordinary patient experience.

Our people — civilians, contract, service members and volunteers -- are at the top of our icon for a reason. Our people are committed to our mission. We must be committed to our people. Our people deserve engaged, trusted leadership; a climate of dignity and respect; education and training; and the opportunity to prosper: personally, professionally, spiritually, and in their family/relationships. Without our people, we have no strategic plan.

The four domains of our prosperity plan: Personal, Professional, Spiritual, and Family/



Relationships provide a framework for how we take care of ourselves and support each other. Our Prosperity Plan Workbook and quarterly Prosperity Plan Fairs are designed for each of us to specify goals, develop a plan to reach those goals, and work hard to achieve them.

We will work to create conditions to prosper in each domain. But, leadership at all levels, beginning with me, must actively create conditions for our people to develop professionally.

Thus, our focus as we launch our strategic plan will be on the professional domain.

Capt. Clarence Thomas, our director for administration, and Mr. David Rohrbaugh, our civilian advisor to the board of directors and to the director (me), lead this foundation work group. Their goal: develop, encourage, and recognize our people. Among their initiatives:

- Professional Development Portal with links to career development courses and to the GS Civilian Individual Development Plan site.
- Organizational positions that allow career development for all of our people, to include our civilian staff.
- Processing time for staff awards.
- Clinical data systems efficiency (AHLTA, CHCS, Essentris).

Capt. Thomas, Mr. Rohrbaugh and their work group welcome your input and involvement and invite you to join their team as we develop, encourage, and recognize our people.

Please be as proud of who we are, what we do, and most importantly, how we do it as I am to serve with you. As always, thank you and may God bless.

Brig. Gen. Jeffrey B. Clark
MC, USA, Director
Walter Reed National Military Medical Center



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Bethesda Notebook

Employment, Education Fair

An employment and education fair is scheduled for tomorrow from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Bldg. 17, atrium and gymnasium. For more information, call Naval Support Activity Bethesda's Fleet and Family Support Center at 301-319-4087 or visit FFSC.events@med.navy.mil.

MLK Jr. Observance

The Walter Reed Bethesda Multi-Cultural Committee will host a program observing the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., on Jan. 29 at 11:30 a.m. in Bldg. 19, first floor, lobby/piano area. Everyone is invited. For more information call Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Buddhika Abeyratne at 301-295-4265.

Nursing Grand Rounds

A Nursing Grand Rounds focusing on Management of the Complex Patient/Family Relationship is scheduled for Jan. 29 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Clark Auditorium. One hour of Continuing Nursing Education for attending the event is offered.

Navy Exchange Inventory Early Closures

The Main exchange closes at 3 p.m. Monday Jan. 26 for inventory. Food vendors, Navy Federal Credit Union and all services will also close at 3 p.m. All services will re-open the following day at normal business hours. Tuesday Jan. 27, the Mini-Mart Lodge, the Mini-Mart and the uniform shop will close at 4 p.m. for inventory and will re-open for normal business hours the following day at normal business hours.

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'American Sniper' Star Visits NSAB

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Brandon Williams-Church
NSAB Public Affairs staff writer

It was a bittersweet occasion for more than 200 service members, their families and staff, as they attended the screening for the movie "American Sniper" in Naval Support Activity Bethesda's (NSAB) Warrior Café, Jan. 15. The on-screen protagonist of the film, Bradley Cooper, portraying Chris Kyle, and wife of the real-life protagonist, Taya Kyle attended the screening and shared their sentiments towards veterans with the crowd of attendees.

"It's a surreal time to be here right now," said Cooper. "It was an honor to work with Taya, she was transparent in giving over what their relationship was like, what he was like, and for me personally it changed my whole life to walk in those shoes for seven months."

The movie focuses around the Naval career of the late Chief Petty Officer Chris Kyle, former U.S. Navy SEAL, and his life on and off the battlefield. After serving four tours in Iraq, and being confirmed as the most lethal sniper in U.S. military history, Chris himself was gunned down by a fellow service member seeking his guidance.



Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Brandon Williams-Church

From left, Walter Reed National Military Medical (WRNMMC) Center Command Master Chief Tyrone Willis, Bradley Cooper, Taya Kyle, WRNMMC Chief of Staff Capt. Sarah L. Martin and Naval Support Activity Bethesda Commanding Officer Capt. David A. Bitonti stand for a picture outside of the Warrior Cafe Jan. 15.

Although a rough subject to be a part of, Taya was gracious in spending some time with service members on base and honoring them for what they do. "I thank you for your service and I will never forget you for what you do every day," said Taya. "You have my gratitude and I truly love you." NSAB Commanding Officer Capt. David A. Bitonti thanked Cooper and Taya for taking the time out of their busy schedules to come onboard and share their experiences with Chris.

In bringing the movie to NSAB, Cooper and Taya hoped

the biopic was a way for service members, past and present, to think back on their careers and to be able to relate to a fellow fallen warrior.

"The goal is to be here in front of you right now," said Cooper. "We worked with veterans and we said 'this is why we do this, is to be able to take this film into places like this and for you to be able to relate to it.' Maybe it can help with making you feel not so alone, your healing, and for those who have no idea what you go through, see this movie and pay respects to all veterans

they see, help them with their groceries, babysit their kids or spend some time with them and not just say thank you for your service, take it a step further. We continue to help carry Chris' message."

A veteran himself, Sgt. Adam Keys was in attendance for the screening, and felt the movie did a great job of showing the struggles between being downrange and returning home to people who largely don't understand what it's like.

"A screening such as this is very powerful for everyone here," said Keys. "This was the

first modern war movie I've seen since being injured, it touched on things that made me look down and several times tear up, but I loved it. It showed things as they are for many service members and I'm grateful they did such a great job of it. Also, the film shows civilians and some of what [they] go through to protect our country, it's not easy, but it is worth it."

Keys thanked Cooper and Taya for being able to understand what service members go through and sharing their time with service members at NSAB.

"The absolute best part of the visit was Taya Kyle," said Keys. "I've never worked with Chris personally but when [his] book came out, he came here and wanted to give out [some]. The books didn't show up on time so he and Taya went out and bought some of their own to give out. She remembered me somehow, I was wheelchair bound at the time, but when she saw me this time I was walking on my prosthetics. She's a tribute and strong role model to other military wives about being resilient. I'm glad she was here to speak with Mr. Cooper before the screening and I was in awe of what they both had to say. It was a genuinely great day here on base. Everyone should see 'American Sniper.'"

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists Week Observed, Jan. 25 - 31

By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class (AW) Chris Krucke
WRNMMC Public Affairs staff writer

Nurse anesthetists have been providing anesthesia care in the United States for approximately 150 years, making them the oldest nurse specialty group in the United States, according to the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists.

In addition, nurse anesthetists are the primary anesthesia providers to U.S. service members at home and abroad.

Because of their efforts in providing the best health care, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist Week (CRNA) is observed annually nationwide and at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC). This year the observance is Jan. 25-31. There will be a both set up next Monday through Friday



Photo by Biomedical Photography Department

Nurse anesthetists at Walter Reed Bethesda practice in every setting in which anesthesia is delivered at the medical center.

from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the America Bldg. lobby where information concerning nurse anesthetists will be available.

Walter Reed Bethesda (WRB) currently has 15 military (eight Army, seven Navy) and 13 civilian CRNAs.

Throughout the military, CRNAs are advanced practice registered nurses board-certified and specializing in the delivery of all forms of anesthesia and

care of patients pre-operatively, intra-operatively and post-operatively. They work in varying roles across all health-care populations (surgical, trauma, obstetric, pediatric, etc.) where they are either independent practitioners or work in collaboration with physician colleagues. In addition, CRNAs serve independently overseas, on ships, and while deployed to remote areas. They have been providing

expert anesthesia care to the military since the Civil War and continue to do so today.

Some of the accomplishments of CRNAs include:

- Catherine S. Lawrence was among the first American nurses to provide anesthesia during the American Civil War between 1861 and 1865.

- In 1877, the first recognized nurse anesthetist was Sister Mary Bernard, a Catholic nun who practiced at St. Vincent's Hospital in Erie, Pa.

- Founded in 1909 by Agnes McGee, the first school of nurse anesthesia was formed at St. Vincent Hospital, Portland, Ore.. The seven month course included anatomy, physiology, pharmacology and administration of common anesthetic agents.

- Art Womble, a certified nurse anesthetist and Army Reserve Soldier from the former Walter Reed Army Medical Center, took part in supporting the

first kidney transplant in the Co-operative Republic of Guyana on July 12, 2009.

Army Maj. James B. Hacker, WRB staff nurse anesthetist, explained requirements to become a CRNA have become much more stringent since McGee established the first school of nurse anesthesia in 1909. He said the minimum requirement to attend anesthesia training now is to be a registered nurse with a recommended one-to-two years of experience working in a critical care environment. Hacker also said to become a CRNA, the nurse needs a Master's of Science in Nursing. "In recent years, most programs are converting to a Doctorate of Nursing practice degree as the new entry level to the profession."

Navy Lt. Cmdr. Eliot Spencer, assistant chief nurse anesthetist at WRB said in order to

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Navy Safe Harbor Helps Sailor Continue Military Career

By Andrew Damstedt
NSAB Public Affairs
staff writer

The prognosis was bleak for Navy Sailor Information Systems Technician 1st Class Eric Campbell after sustaining a severe traumatic brain injury while stationed at a NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) command in Naples, Italy in 2012. Doctors didn't know whether he'd survive, let alone recover after his fall.

But now, after more than two years of treatment, Campbell is set to leave Naval Support Activity Bethesda and continue his military career at the Center for Information Dominance in Pensacola, Fla.

"When he had his accident, he was in Italy and when we were notified, we weren't sure he was going to make it," his mother, Annette Campbell said. "But to see where he was and how he is today, is a tremendous change. He was a fighter all along."

She said when her son first awoke, he didn't know who she was and he didn't remember he had been in an accident.

"His brain injury affected his frontal lobe where he didn't know who anybody was; he didn't remember the accident – he just didn't know," she said. "Once he started healing, it came back to him little by little. He had to learn how to walk and write all over again. It was like going from a toddler to back to himself within two years."

Eric, 29, came to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) for treatment. Because of Navy Wounded Warrior Safe Harbor assistance, his mother was able to stay by his bedside until he was transferred to a Richmond, Va., hospital for ongoing therapy. Eric said the Safe Harbor program "intercepted him" after finding out about his accident and has helped him since he first arrived. Safe Harbor's mission is to provide tailored non-medical assistance for severely ill or wounded Sailors and Coast Guardsmen during the recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration phases.

"I would like to say Navy Safe Harbor was there with us every step of the way," Annette said. "Master Chief (Anthony) Edwards was always there

whenever we needed a place to stay – he arranged everything for us. He got us the right kind of help financially and he was our connection to a lot of the different phases that Eric went through. He was our liaison, which I know is what his job is, but if not for him, I would have been lost."

Eric said he might have been frustrated at the start of his recovery process, especially when his mom told him about his short-term memory loss.

"I'm like, 'What do you mean short term memory issues?'" he said. "I disagreed with her for a while and then after I came back here and they put it in the forefront and in my face and they made it more aware to me ... what short term memory loss she was talking about. It's not like [that I] can't remember last week, two weeks or a year ago, she meant I can't remember 30 seconds ago or five minutes ago."

After a stint at a hospital in Johnstown, Penn., Eric came back to WRNMMC in the spring of 2013 for medical evaluation to see whether he could return to active duty.



Photo by Andrew Damstedt

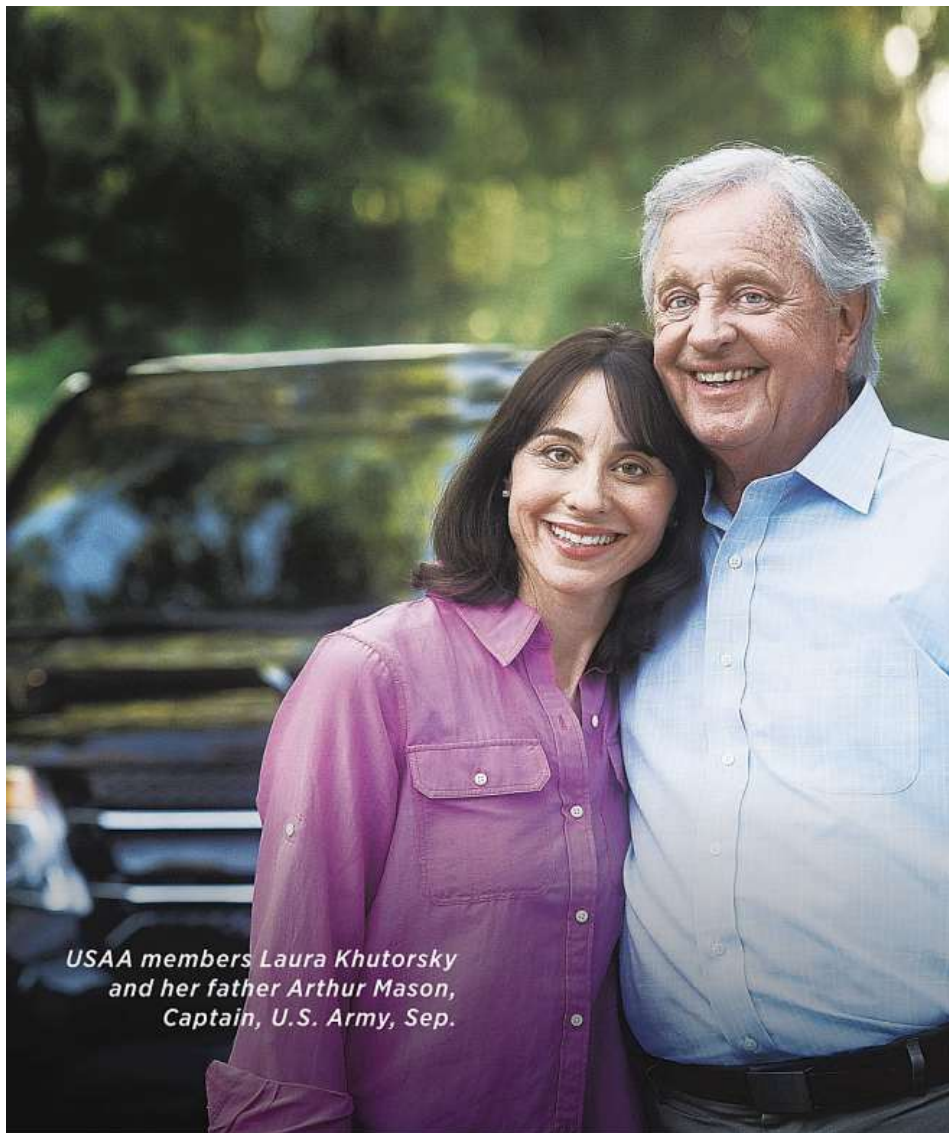
**Information Systems Technician 1st Class
Eric Campbell**

"So they did the tests, evaluations and they decided they didn't want to return me to active duty at that time," Eric said. "So they had me do more therapy, speech and language pathology, occupational therapy

for cognitive reasons. Physical training wasn't an issue for me. I passed that in like a month."

Master Chief Anthony Edwards, Navy Wounded Warrior

See **SAFE** page 6



USAA members Laura Khutorsky
and her father Arthur Mason,
Captain, U.S. Army, Sep.

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Thyroid Awareness Month

Small Gland Plays Big Role in Overall Health

By Bernard S. Little
WRNMMC Public
Affairs staff writer

January is Thyroid Awareness Month. According to the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists (AACE) and American College of Endocrinology (ACE), an estimated 30 million Americans suffer from thyroid disorders and approximately half of them don't know it.

"The thyroid gland is a small, butterfly-shaped gland located in the base of the neck just below the Adam's apple," explained Army Col. (Dr.) Henry B. Burch, of Endocrinology Service at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. Burch is also the endocrinology consultant to the Office of the U.S. Army Surgeon General, as well as Endocrinology Division chair and professor of medicine at the Uniformed Services University.

The thyroid gland plays an important role in the body, influencing the function of the heart, brain, liver, kidneys and skin, Burch explained. Ensuring that the thyroid gland is healthy and functioning properly is essential to the body's overall well-being, he added.

According to Dr. Jeffrey Garber, a Harvard endocrinologist, The thyroid is like a car's engine, setting the pace at which



Courtesy photo from CDC.gov

Physicians check the necks of patients to help determine if there is a concern for thyroid disease.

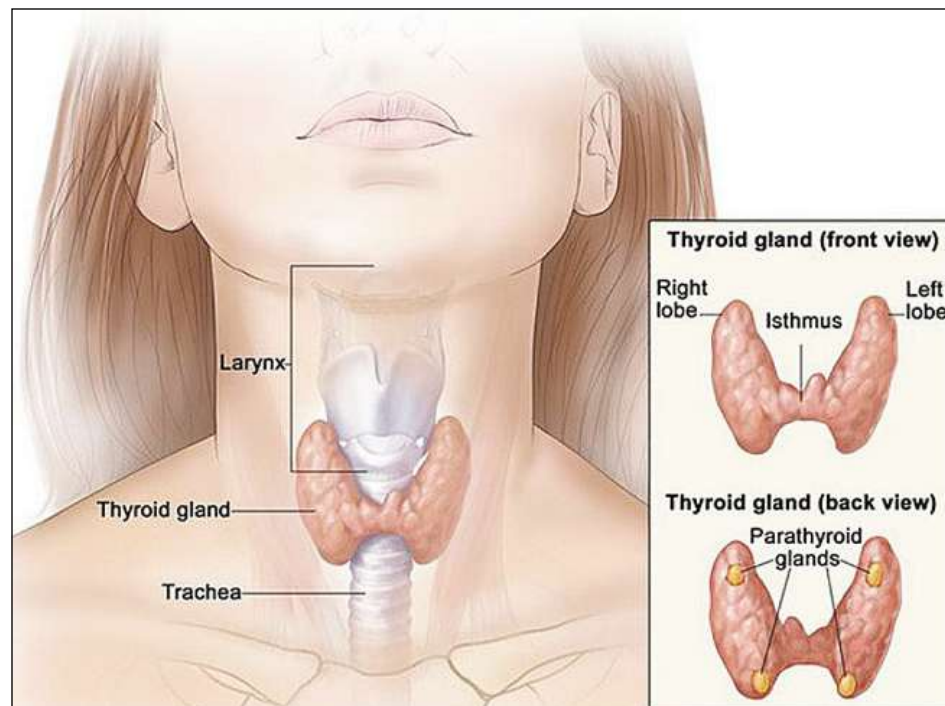
the body operates, according to Dr. Jeffrey Garber, a Harvard endocrinologist. Like a car's engine produces energy to help it move, the thyroid gland manufactures hormones to prompt cells to perform. These hormones maintain the rate at which the body uses fats and carbohydrates, controls body temperature, influences heart rate and regulates the production of protein and proper brain function.

Iodine from one's diet, is "fuel" the thyroid needs to produce hormones, Garber added. "When outside influences such as disease, damage to the thyroid or certain medicines break down communication, your thyroid might not produce enough hormones," he continued. "This would slow down all of your body's functions, a condition known as hypo-

thyroidism or underactive thyroid.

"Your thyroid could also produce too much hormones sending your systems into overdrive, a condition known as hyperthyroidism or overactive thyroid. These two conditions are most often features of an underlying thyroid disease," Garber said.

Of the nearly 30 million people suffering from a thyroid condition, most have hypothyroidism, according to AACE and ACE.



Courtesy graphic from CDC.gov

Symptoms associated with hypothyroidism include pervasive fatigue; drowsiness; increased sensitivity to cold; constipation; sore muscles; weight gain and fluid retention; puffy face; difficulty with learning; dry, brittle hair and nails; dry, itchy skin; increased frequency of miscarriages;

forgetfulness; and unexpected weight gain.

Those with hyperthyroidism may experience heart palpitations; anxiety; irritability; being argumentative; trembling hands; intolerance of warm temperatures and increased likelihood to perspire; loss of scalp hair; muscle weakness;

loose and frequent bowel movements; prominent "stare" of the eyes; protrusion of the eyes; insomnia; poor concentration and memory; increased likelihood for miscarriage; nervousness; insomnia; and sudden weight loss, despite no drastic dietary

See **THYRIOD** page 6

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SAFE

Continued from page 4

Safe Harbor non-medical care manager, said at times he believed it was "far-fetched" for Eric to stay in the Navy. But, he said, Eric never wavered on his goal to recover and continue his service.

"He could've taken the easy way and I mean he could've simply said 'I want to get out,'" Edwards said. "I had internships lined up for him. I explained to him: 'Here's two courses of action we could take. It's up to you.' He decided he wanted to stay in. If not we could've got him into internships that would've prepared him for separation as well."

Edwards kept him informed of different activities he could participate in, such as attending a USO (United Service Organizations) gala and going to a professional military leadership course at Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling.

While he's happy to see Eric's progress, Edwards said he is sorry to see

him leave. Eric's become an ambassador for the Safe Harbor program and became a mentor to junior Sailors, Edwards said.

"I wish we could keep him here for a little longer, but he has to get back out there so he can stay competitive," Edwards said.

While the plan during recovery was to stay in the Navy, Eric wasn't always set on a military career. He joined the Navy on Feb. 28, 2005, and attributed his time in Italy where he was frocked to a first-class Petty Officer, as part of the reason he wants to stay in the Navy. Some of the credit goes to the Safe Harbor program because, he said, it opened up his desire to help junior Sailors.

"Since I've been here with Safe Harbor and [the] Wounded Warrior program, it's widened my aspect and knowledge of helping people — especially being here at a hospital," Eric said.

Another draw is his desire to get stationed in Italy or somewhere in Europe again.

And what does he think of his odds? "Maybe, maybe not," he replied.

THYROID

Continued from page 5

changes. As with hypothyroidism, those with hyperthyroidism may develop a goiter, according to AACE and ACE.

Burch explained the best way to determine if one has a thyroid condition is by having a TSH (thyroid-stimulating hormone) test performed. A TSH test measures the amount of thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) in the blood. He also recommends people perform a self-neck check, looking for bulges or protrusions in your neck while swallowing water (<http://www.thyroidawareness.com/neck-check>).

Garber notes that because thyroid disease often runs in families, examinations of family members and a review of their medical histories may reveal other individuals with thyroid problems. He added thyroid disorders are most common in women.

Another condition that can affect the thyroid is cancer, which is one of the fastest growing cancers in America, according to AACE and ACE officials. It is also one of the most curable, they add. Five-year survival rates are 97.8 percent in the United States, according to the National Cancer Institute.

For more information concerning thyroid disorders, visit www.thyroidawareness.com, and <http://seer.cancer.gov/statfacts/html/thyro.html>.

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Google Launches Virtual USS Constitution Tour Experience



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Michael Mui

Google Maps published a complete 360-degree virtual experience of USS Constitution Tuesday. Using Street View technology, Google Maps photographed the ship in fall 2014 to create an online 360-degree virtual experience of touring Constitution in preparation for the ship’s scheduled dry dock restoration period, which begins in March 2015.

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NURSE

Continued from page 3

be re-certified, CRNAs must obtain a minimum of 40 hours of approved continuing education every two years, document substantial anesthesia practice, maintain current state licensure and certify that they have not developed any conditions that could adversely affect their ability to practice anesthesia.

Spencer, who has been active duty for 22 years in the Navy, said his favorite part about being a CRNA is having the opportunity to take care of one patient at a time and giving them the best anesthetic experience possible. “I genuinely care about each patient and treat them as if they were a member of my family. I strive to utilize all of my knowledge, skills and experience to guide my care and keep my patients safe and comfortable,” he said.

Hacker, who has been active duty for the past 17 years, said, “I most enjoy the autonomy of my work and being able to serve the finest patient population there is. It’s wonderful to be able to focus solely on the case at hand and give the patient the confidence they need to get through a stressful situation.”

Hacker has worked as a staff CRNA at Madigan Army Medical Center at Joint Base Lewis McChord while serving as the sole CRNA and Commander of the 758th Forward Surgical Team. “If

becoming a CRNA is what you really want to do, you’ll have to persevere,” he said. “It is not easy to meet the requirements to enter school, but once you achieve it then nothing can stop you. If you are in the military already and are applying then you have a chance to go to one of the two finest schools in the country. Both are rated in the top five nationally and prepare us to deliver the best care to our Soldiers and Sailors in any environment.”

Spencer said he found out about CRNAs in nursing school when he had the opportunity to work with a Naval Reserve CRNA during his first clinical rotation at the Veterans’ Administration Hospital in Columbia, S.C. “After working with her for two weeks, I knew that is what I eventually wanted to do with my life and was excited that I could serve my country doing the job I loved as well,” he explained.

“If you think you might be interested in becoming a CRNA, please come and talk to one of us,” Spencer said. “You can shadow with us in the OR, see if you like what we do, and [we can] then talk to you about the Nurse Anesthesia program, working hours/lifestyle and service-specific deployment realities and potential duty stations/ assignments.”

For more information, contact Lt. Jacqueline Price, CRNA WRNMMC Anesthesia Department, at Jacqueline.e.price2.mil@mail.mil.

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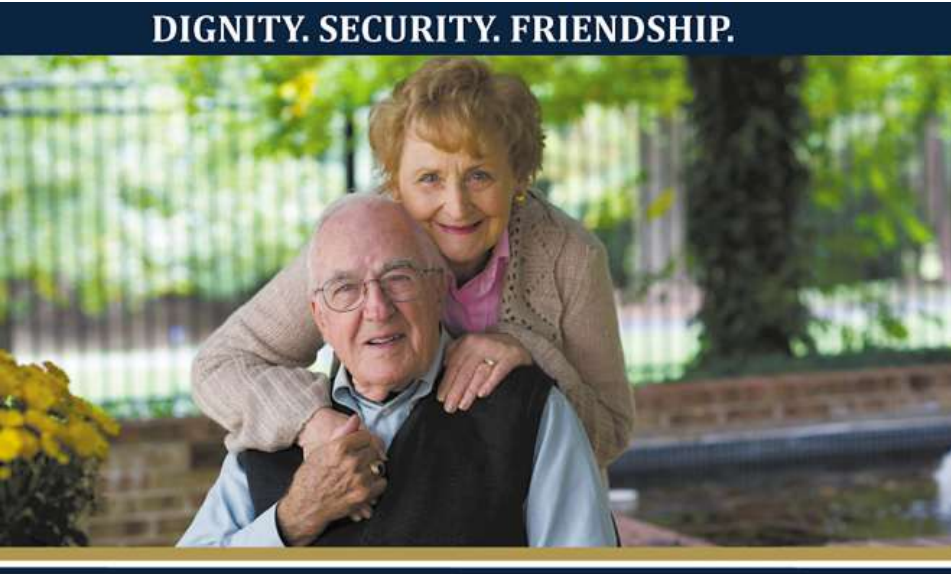
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